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RE: Serial No. 10/501,234 (Reiko UENO et al.), filed July 12, 2004

MESSAGE:

Agenda for interview scheduled for April 21, 2009 @ 2:00 p.m. in Application Serial No. 10/501,234

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Serial Number: 10/501,234

Claimed Invention (claim 43).

1. Method of starting a first routing device connecting a plurality of networks to which a plurality of routing devices are connected.
2. Master router data is stored (for each network) by each routing device and indicates whether the respective routing device is a master router or a slave router with respect to each network to which the respective routing device is connected.
3. With respect to each network the master router is a router that is connected to a network nearest to a parent router that assigns the network identification data to identify the networks.
4. With respect to each network the slave router is a router that is connected to a network other than the network nearest to the parent router.
5. Disabling a router function of the first routing device when, in relation to the networks to which the first routing device connects, a number of detected master routers connected to any of the networks to which the first routing device connects is zero or two or more, wherein the number of detected master routers is determined based on acquired master router data received from the routers in response to a request for the master router data, such that a loop path is prevented from forming between the first routing device and the plurality of routing devices

Prior Art Reference.

1. Kanekar teaches that a slave router serves as a backup device upon a failure of the master router, wherein the slave router must have the same network environment as the master router in order to be able to serve as the backup for the master router (see Figs. 3, 5, 8, 9 and 14; Abstract; and cols. 15 and 16).
2. Specifically, Kanekar teaches that the master router and the slave router have an identical placement with relation to the networks.
3. Kanekar teaches that the slave router takes over the master router upon failure of the master router (see col. 8, lines 64-66).

Differences.

1. Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest that the master router data (stored by each router) indicates whether the respective routing device is a master router or a slave router with respect to each network to which the respective routing device is connected, as required by claim 43.
2. Because Kanekar requires that the master router and the slave router are identically arranged in the network environment, Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest that with respect to each network, the master router is a router that is connected to a network nearest to a parent router that assigns the network identification data to identify the networks, and that with respect to each network, the slave router is a router that is connected to a network other than the network nearest to the parent router, as recited in claim 43.

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3. Because Kanekar requires that the slave router takes over the master router upon failure of the master router, Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest that, based on the number of master routers determined from the acquired master data sent in response to the request, a router function is disabled, as recited in claim 43.
4. Because Kanekar does not even mention network topology, Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest disabling the first router function when a number of detected master routers connected to any of the networks to which the first routing device connects is zero or two or more, such that a loop path is prevented from forming between the first routing device and the plurality of routing devices, as required by claim 43.

Discussion of Attached Drawings (for exemplary purposes only)

1. For better understanding of prevention of forming a loop path, some examples are explained with reference to figs. A, B, and C.
2. Fig. A shows an example in which the router function is not disabled because the number of master router is one. The router X is now being connected to the subnet B which has one master router (MASTER 1) and two slave routers (SLAVE 2, SLAVE 3). The router X receives one piece of master router data indicating a master router from MASTER 1, that is, the number of master router is one. In this case it is determined that the loop path could not be formed and thus the router function of the router X is not disabled.
3. Figs. B and C show an example in which the router is disabled because the number of master router is two or three, respectively. In Fig. B, the router X is now being connected to the subnets B and D. The router X receives two pieces of master router data indicating a master router from both MASTER 1 and MASTER 2, that is, the number of master router is two. In this case it is determined that the loop path could be formed and thus the router function of the router X is disabled. If the function of the router X is not disabled, that is the loop path is formed by the router X, when one device connected to the subnet B communicates with the other device connected to the subnet E, there could be two communication routes. The one route is from the subnet B through the subnet A and the subnet D to the subnet E, and the other route is from the subnet B, through the router X and then subnet D, to the subnet E. In this case, it is hard to determine only one communication route.
4. In Fig. C, the router X is now connecting to the subnets B, C and D. The router X receives three pieces of master router data indicating that the router is a master router from MASTER 1, MASTER 2 and MASTER 3, that is, the number of master router is three. In this case, it is determined that the loop path could be formed and thus the router function of the router X is disabled.

FIG. A

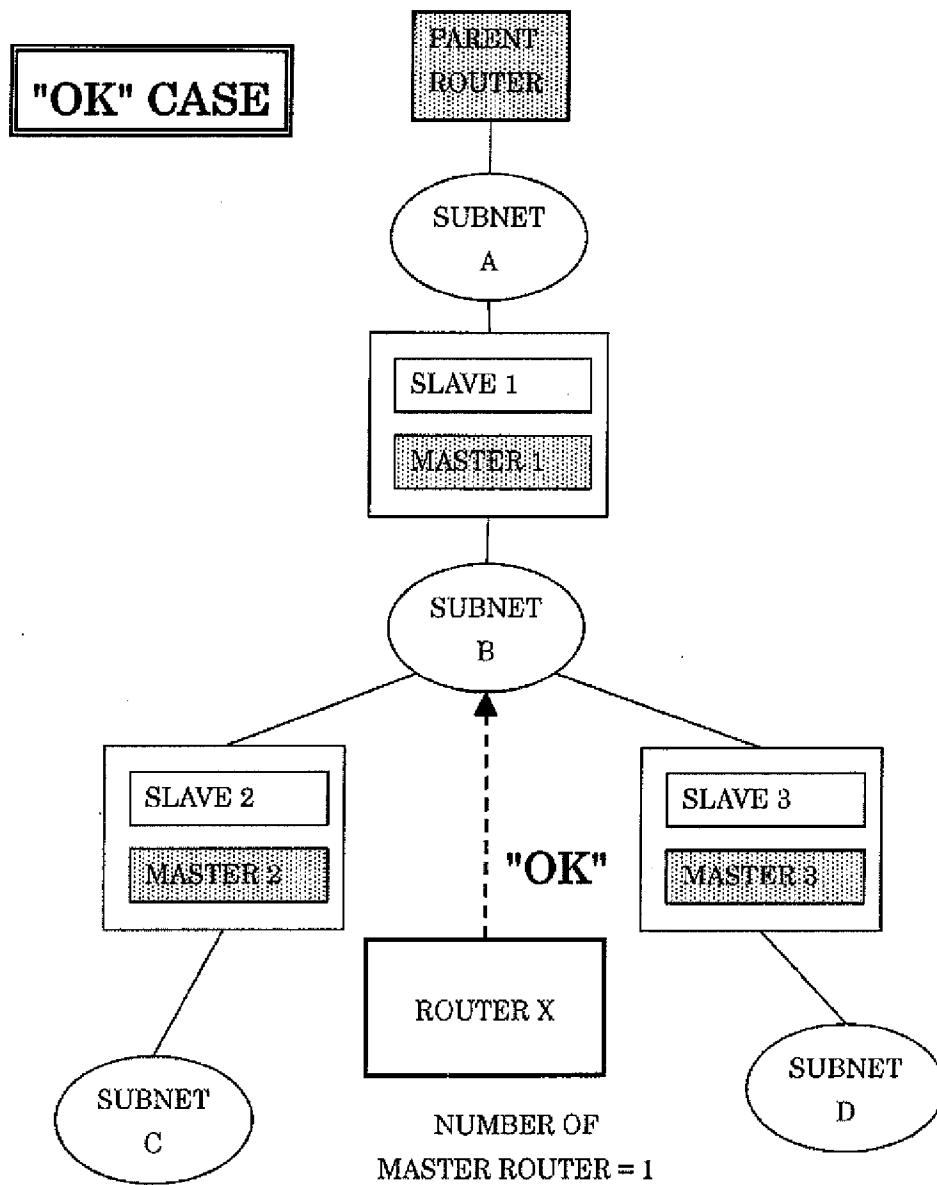


FIG. B

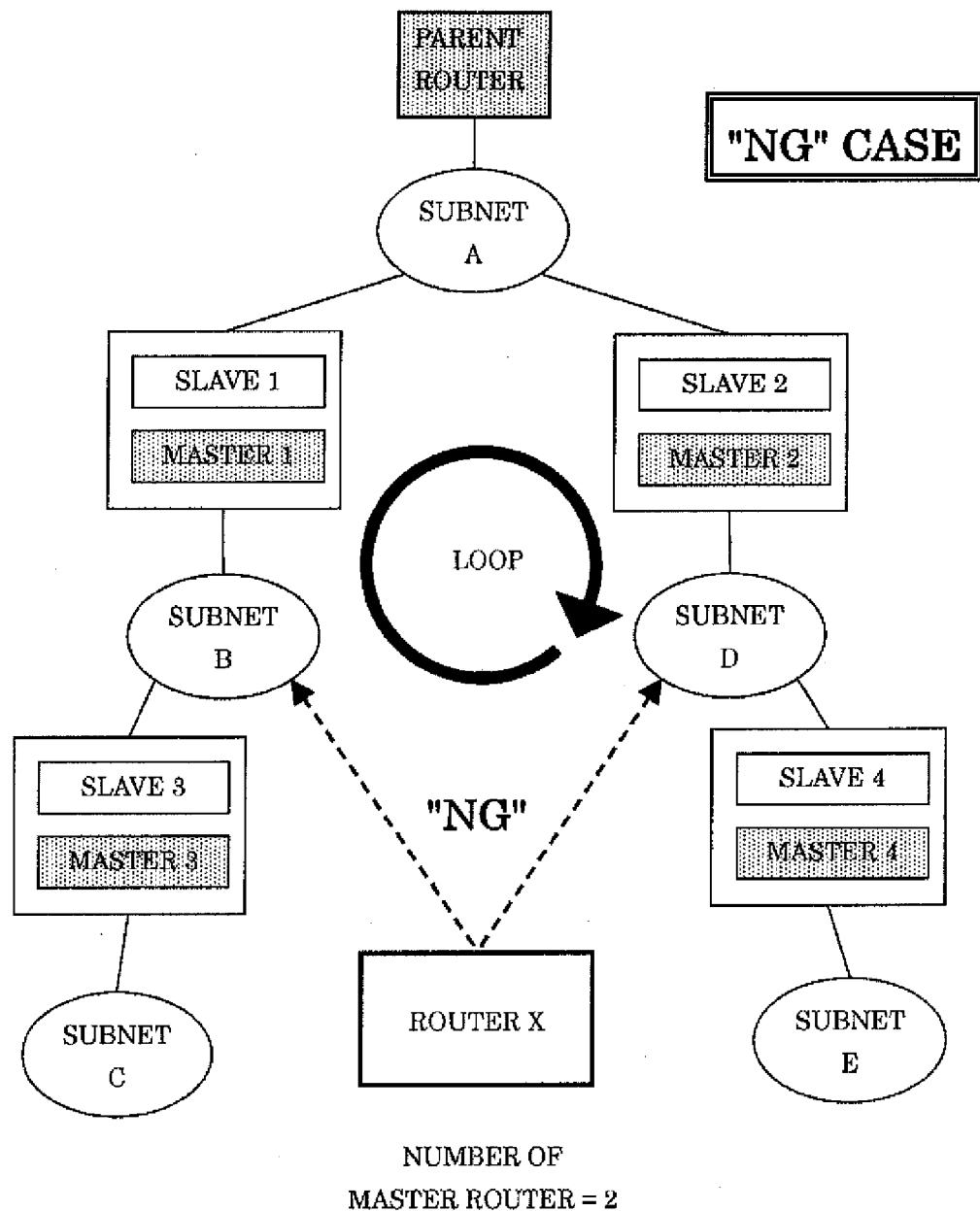


FIG. C

